

ADVENTURE IN FAITH

5 FIVE GATES TO LIVING NOW



Weekly Materials for
Small Groups



MileHi Church

It's different here.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Resonance: Leaving Normal Behind	5
Relationship: Love Forward.....	10
Relevance: You Are More Than What Bombards You.....	17
Realness: Making Real Connections.....	23
Rebirth: Making Way For New Life.....	29

2021 Adventure in Faith Committee

Jennifer Burnett
Donna DeNomme
Lori Hladik
Steve Kindsfather
Chris Plym
Josh Reeves
Rocio Self
Sarah Shin

INTRODUCTION



Facilitators

GROUP TIMES AND MEMBERS:

Groups should be at least one hour, but no more than an hour and a half. Ideally, each group should have no more than twelve participants, including the facilitators.

Opening and Closing Blessings

A brief blessing should start and end each group session. Ideally a facilitator will do an opening blessing, as trust grows in the group, it might be beneficial to invite a participant to say a closing blessing.

Key Points

These key points sum up what we intend the participant to understand in each week's session. You can choose to share these points with the group, or use them as your own guide for how to use the curriculum effectively.

Discussion Questions

These questions are designed to create meaningful sharing in your group. You can choose which, if any to ask.

Processes

These meditations, mini workshops and experientials are designed to assist the participant in their inner exploration of faith. Choose the ones that you feel will be most resonant with your group.

Weekly Prayers

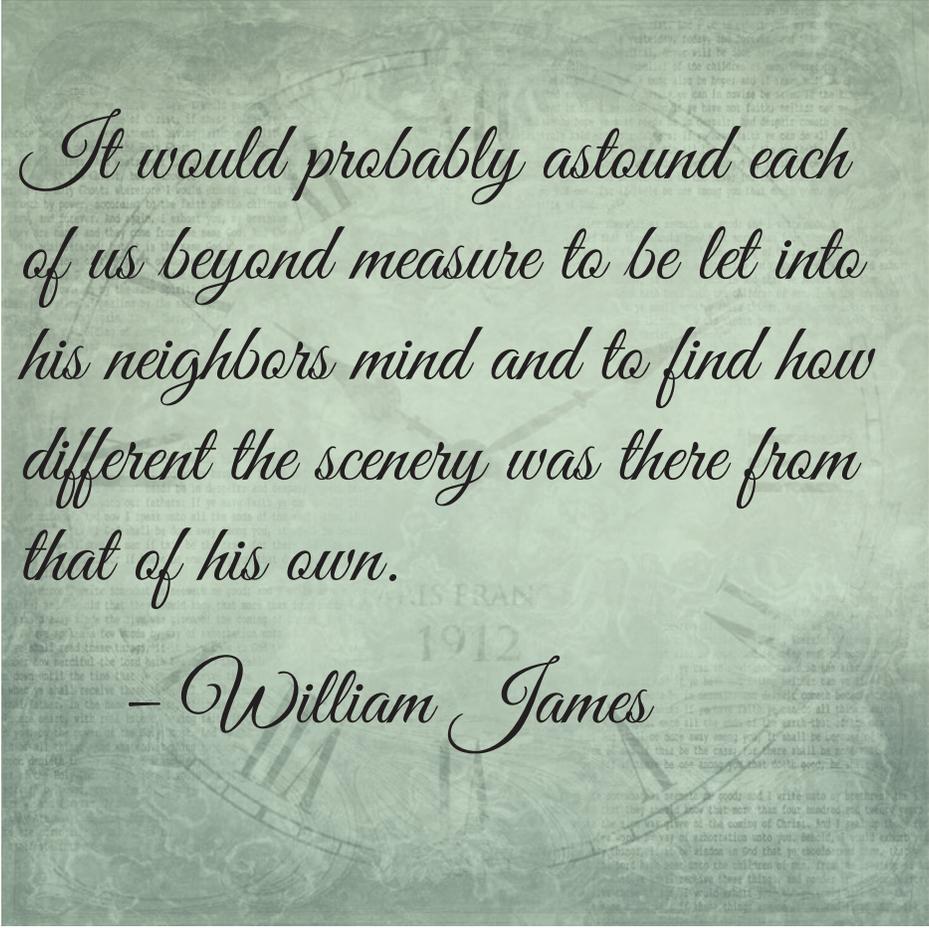
Each week concludes with an affirmative prayer. Invite participants to say this prayer daily, as a way to deepen in the week's topic, and to practice together with their small group.

Sharing Guidelines

It is recommended that you review these guidelines in the first week and refer to each week after as needed.

SHARING GUIDELINES: (Handout to download)

- ◆ I respect the confidentiality of what is said by others, either to me or to the group.
- ◆ I speak from the "I/me" voice, I am authentic and stay on topic while still expressing my true feelings and concerns.
- ◆ I listen to others with an open mind and I refrain from giving advice.
- ◆ I choose to share or pass as needed and will push thru my own personal tendencies in group participation.
- ◆ I choose to engage in respectful communication that is honoring of the group.
- ◆ Since I am an integral part of this group, I agree to show up and participate fully.



It would probably astound each of us beyond measure to be let into his neighbors mind and to find how different the scenery was there from that of his own.

— William James

5 Gates to Living Now

“Faith is a determination to keep in touch with the un-nameable Being that dwells in the heart of all existence—you and me included.”

~ Robert Fulghum

There was probably a time for each of us during the current pandemic, where we paused and said something like, “There will be no getting back to normal.” This may have been scary or disappointing, but most likely, there was also perhaps a spark of hopefulness or feeling of creative possibility. As many challenges and as much tragedy as the pandemic has caused, for many of us it has also offered the opportunity to deepen and step more courageously into change. What is the goal? I think personally it is to learn to live in the now, but not just

in a mindful, present way, but fully understanding what it means to be alive in today’s world, and what it means to fully embody the gifts of the present time. Through studying and exploring the 5 gates to living now, we embark on a faith adventure, renewing our sense that this thing called life is for us and not against us, and that the awareness and love we cultivate today, is the true catalyst in what demonstrates as our tomorrows.



Resonance

The first gate to living now is **resonance**.

There is no greater single creative opportunity than the present. Ernest Holmes defined life as infinite energy coupled with limitless creative imagination. Yet, to realize this truth in our daily lives, we must realize it again and again through cultivating a resonance that consciously connects us with Life around and within us.

One definition for **resonance** could be that it is the voice of God...speaking to us through the most profound and even mundane parts of our everyday life. When we hear it, it speaks to our souls, and connects us more deeply with our lives.

The Christian writer Frederick Beuchner taught about the importance of listening for God in your life. This is the power of spiritual resonance. He said:

“There is no chance thing through which God cannot speak—even the walk from the house to the garage that you have walked ten thousand times before, even the moments when you cannot believe there is a God who speaks at all anywhere. He speaks, I believe, and the words he speaks are incarnate in the flesh and blood of our selves and of our own footsore and sacred journeys.”

Could it be that all our life is calling for today is a more profound way of listening for Spirit in our lives, and responding with heart when we do? There may be no more creative action.

Key points of week

- The First Gate to Living Now is resonance. Finding and staying true to what resonates,

cultivates spiritual and creative power for Living Now.

- Resonance is when we discover something in everyday life that inspires a deeper life within us to be born.
- Each of us has the power to open up to a more profound way of listening to the Sacred in our lives, and acting upon what we hear.

Quotes for the Journey

“It is the nature of the Creative Mind to respond to us, to give us what we ask when we ask it, and in the way in which we ask it. Thus the childlike mind of absolute acceptance is likened unto the kingdom of heaven. In actual practice we must let go of the mental images which we dislike, and cling only to those which are more nearly after our hearts desire.” –Ernest Holmes

“Life moves at a deeper level than the objective and the data of our senses. We are most alive when we are brought face to face with the response of the deepest thing in us to the deepest thing in life.”
–Howard Thurman

“That which God said to the rose, and caused it to laugh in full bloom beauty, he said to my heart and made it a hundred times more beautiful.”
– Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi

“People say that what we’re all seeking is a meaning for life. I don’t think that’s what we’re really seeking. I think what we’re seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.” – Joseph Campbell



Discussion Questions

1. What is a song that has a particular resonance to your heart and meaning in your life?

2. What is a great piece of advice you've received that you now like to pass on to others?

More in depth discussion:

3. How do you define resonance?

4. Where in your life is God speaking to you most strongly? If God is speaking everywhere through resonance, is there an area in your life where you might better listen?



Optional Process

OPTION 1

Discovering Newfound Spiritual Resonance (using questions from Dr. Roger Teel's "This Life is Joy")

Create a meditative environment and invite each participant to have their journal out to respond to each question. Three minutes per question.

- **“What in my experience no longer represents the Truth of my Spiritual Nature or the mandates of my heart?”**
- **“What is the Spirit-Inspired possibility for my life that a part of me is afraid to comprehend?”**
- **“What next step seeks to be conceived in my awareness and incubated in my heart?”**

After the ten-minute process, have your group share in groups of three or four. Make sure each person has at least five minutes to share their answers.

When complete and all back together, consider asking the question “Is anyone willing to share a change or choice they are called to make in their life to bring forth the answers that came up for them during this process?”

OPTION 2

Moving from Dissonance to Resonance:

In order to truly live a life that resonates with our being, we cannot give our life away to others. We must live it fully present, ready, and with anticipation that by deeply listening to life, it provides us all we need.

This requires however moving from blame to responsibility, from victimhood to championing, from being regret or worry-focused, to present-minded.

The life that doesn't resonate with the life within yourself, isn't life at all, and it is anything but alive. It is but a manufactured version of life bought into by Others. What are you carrying that is not your truth, but one imposed upon you by someone else? What are you dragging along, that no longer serves you?

There is a deeper life. One that resonates in your own soul and brings bumps of aliveness on your own skin. It's funny because it is the oldest thing there is, and yet, it is still the most present and filled with possibilities.

To discover that life that speaks to and calls forth that authentic life within us, is to move past the forms of life that in all truth are dead to us, to discover a rebirth in the heart of what truly resonates, and brings a greater life within us forward.

In order to move into a greater degree of resonance in our lives, we must move away from that which is creating dissonance. Resonance creates harmony with life, dissonance gets in the way.

LEADS TO DISSONANCE	LEADS TO RESONANCE
Victimhood and Blame	Acceptance and Responsibility
Holds all to the past (all is fixed)	Stays open in the present (all is fluid)
Hubris – Thinking one is right	Humility – Staying open at the top
Pessimism	Optimism
Believes in an enemy	Does best to seek harmony with others
Unhealthy communication	Courageous communication

What else might you add to this list? Where in your life are you currently experiencing resonance and where dissonance? Are there things you can do to move from dissonance to resonance? Moving toward resonance, will create more opportunities to connect to the new vibrancy, and new vitality Living Now has to offer.

OPTION 3

(This process is suggested at the completion of your first session)

Heart Resonance Meditation:

Sit in your sacred space and align with the intention to be here NOW.

Close your eyes and become conscious of your breathing and take one deep breath allowing your belly to expand. Release with the sound-awwww!

Now, if you are comfortable, place your right hand on your heart and your left hand on your belly. Breathe normally paying attention to the movement in your belly and your heart.

Move your attention to the heart space and continue breathing. Notice the expansion as you inhale slowly but deeply into your heart center. And notice your chest collapse in the exhale. Keep breathing consciously focused on your heart center for a few more breathes.

Now listen to your heart beat as you breathe normally with your right hand still touching your heart center. Do you feel resonance with your heart beat and the pulse of your hand? It is the same breath, the same beat apparently in two places but originating from the one source.

Complete meditation by reading prayer for the week.



Prayer for the week

I enter in the space where my soul recognizes itself within the divine presence. I know that in the realm of now, there is nothing to seek and nothing to forgive. In this present moment I am one with the divine and the past has no power to dictate who I am while I rest in the presence of the most high.

I am more than what bombards me, I am more than what is happening and I do not deny the experience but let it be washed away by the touch of divine grace as I fully enter this new day. What used to be normal has ceased to serve, and I now co-create in a deeper, conscious way.

Tapping into resonance I connect with the rhythm of my divine nature and I respond from this center space knowing I am not here by mistake because wherever I go I belong. I claim a new normal that resonates with the intelligence of my heart in harmony with all of life. The life I live now is congruent and whole and it doesn't have to make sense that I can be happy and joyous while I have empathy for every rising opportunity to heal and demonstrate wholeness in new ways. I stop waiting for things to change, knowing I am change itself. I leave normal behind and look forward to creating a new life. I am not going back dear God, I am still alive and that means you and I are one, living each moment as the most precious moment we have. I give thanks for the life I have, for the opportunities to shine and for the difference I make by being my authentic self. Amen!

Affirmation

Divine resonance is the sacred beating of the heart following the rhythm of love as our infinite source.

When I do what resonates in my heart, I do not regret it, and each step I take reveals to me the next.

Next Week

Next week we will be exploring the topic of *"Relationships."* How can moving into a place of renewed relationships, help each of us live a greater today and nurture a more profound intimacy in our tomorrows?

Consider this quote for the week and how your life might change if you lived this way:

"Dance. Smile. Giggle. Marvel. TRUST. HOPE. LOVE. WISH. BELIEVE. Most of all, enjoy every moment of the journey, and appreciate where you are at this moment instead of always focusing on how far you have to go."

– Mandy Hale

EXERCISE:

RESONANCE

In order to move into a greater degree of resonance in our lives, we must move away from that which is creating dissonance. Resonance creates harmony with life, dissonance gets in the way.

LEADS TO DISSONANCE	LEADS TO RESONANCE
Victimhood and Blame	Acceptance and Responsibility
Holds all to the past (all is fixed)	Stays open in the present (all is fluid)
Hubris – Thinking one is right	Humility – Staying open at the top
Pessimism	Optimism
Believes in an enemy	Does best to seek harmony with others
Unhealthy communication	Courageous communication

What else might you add to this list? Where in your life are you currently experiencing resonance and where dissonance? Are there things you can do to move from dissonance to resonance? Moving toward resonance, will create more opportunities to connect to the new vibrancy, and new vitality Living Now has to offer.